

## What Are You Thankful For?

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## What Are You Thankful For?

by [Hawku](#)

### Summary

"I sneered at a Klingon, albeit so subtle they thought they imagined it, but my point was made." - Unofficial Literary Challenge 17: In the early 25th century, Captain McCary of the U.S.S. *Tsunami* discovers a world being repeatedly conquered by the Klingon Empire.

### Notes

Author's notes: This was written in November 2015, as part of the Star Trek Online Forums Unofficial Literary Challenge #17.

Unofficial Literary Challenge #17: Prompt #1: Thanksgiving is a North American holiday that originated as a combination of harvest celebration and religious festival. Earthlings still celebrate it in the 25th century, but what did the nonhuman citizens of the Federation or neighboring states make of it? And most of all, what are they thankful for?

### *Unofficial Literary Challenge #17*

"What Are You Thankful For?"

The *Steamrunner*-class U.S.S. *Tsunami* tractor-beamed a distressed starship out of a decayed-orbit above the undefined world of Raatooras.

"Will you be alright?" Captain McCary, upon the Bridge of his ship, hailed and asked.

A pale, forehead-ridged Arin'Sen refugee named Tobias replied, "*We will now, thanks to you. That's the last time we attempt a one-ship Kolvoord Starburst when leaving orbit.*"

"Seems like you could have just left normally," McCary suggested.

Tobias nodded. "*Alas, we are victims of pomp and circumstance,*" he replied seconds before a Klingon Bird of Prey decloaked off his port bow and shot his ship down.

The *Tsunami* crew watched in horror and shock as the Arin'Sen ship went careening back into the planet's atmosphere.

"*Talk about going on and on like some Betazoid sacred chalice owner. Well, they're crashed now,*" said the Klingon commander of the *Rotog*, after his image blinked on screen. "*By the way, I am Captain Sigon.*"

Wide-eyed and in shock, Captain McCary blurted, "What the hell, man?? We were just saving them??"

"*What? Why? This world is currently being conquered by the Klingon Empire.*"

McCary crossed his arms in distracted realization. "Well, that explains why it wasn't appearing on the shared galactic map."

"*That map is too confusing! Earth is in the Beta Quadrant? I just don't get it. Also, what is the deal with your forehead? Your ridges look Klingon?*" Sigon noticed.

The Captain nodded. "I'm one-fourth, but, like most part-Klingons, we don't like to acknowledge it, except when forced into the Day of Honor

by a Talaxian or need to explain why we get angry. I mean, it's an exclusive trait, am I right?"

*"I can't tell if your tone is sarcastic or naiveté. But, in the spirit of surviving the Iconian War, and for allowing our forces to be ordered about by the Kagran officer of unbelievable rank, I would like for you to join us at the tlho' poH Feast!"*

McCary hesitated. "Well, I am keen to learn more about my mysterious culture, which everyone keeps saying is the least mysterious of them all by now. So, yes. I will join you."

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Down on the planet, in an open square within a city center that was outfitted with dinner tables, food, and eating-Klingons, Arin'Sen slaves were being recruited and forced to truck barrels of meat and wine to jovial, indulgent-stuck war-mad invaders.

"Welcome to the Feast!" Sigon opened, just after Captain McCary and two of his crew beamed in. "So, targ's out of the bag, we've annexed this planet before. You see, tlho' poH Feast commiserates a time of thanks and non-secular worship, to express what we Klingons are most thankful of."

Lieutenant Commander Deborah asked, "And what's that?"

"Our tradition of cultural imperialism! You see, every year we return to this planet as a family, conquer it, and have a feast!"

McCary tossed his arms up in disappointment. "How could you ever think we'd be okay with that?"

"Because we're allies? Don't look at me. It was the Iconians that brought us together." Sigon slapped him on his back. "Now, come have some traditional blood stuffing and blood pie!"

Commander Morris turned to them. "He's got us there, Captain. Besides, I wouldn't mind trying the blood taters, to be honest."

"Fine," McCary said, noticing a lone Arin'Sen kid scanning everyone from the sidelines. "Just don't let things escalate into genocide, no matter how natural that may come to us."

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Following the kid through an Arin'Sen communal area, into a poorly managed living district with tents and huts, McCary entered an unlit home where the kid delivered his scanner to his father and sister.

"Hah! Found the rebellion, and all it took was luck-based detective work," McCary opened. "Sorry about barging into your home, by the way."

From a dimly lit table where the two adults were, the daughter, Celecc, replied, "Well, of course there's a rebellion! The Klingons force us to rebuild our economy year after year, despite every now and then a small portion of us are able to escape via spaceship."

"Uh, yeah," McCary added, nervously, while trying to avoid eye contact.

The older man, Hemly, grumbled. "The time for Arin'Sen rebellion is over; vengeance must be taken, then repurposed, refitted and taken again."

"Father, that's not who we are! Our people rebel in our own, passive way and we should be proud of that," urged Celecc. "Just yesterday, I sneered at a Klingon, albeit so subtle they thought they imagined it, but my point was made."

McCary watched as Hemly got up, whipped his chair to the floor and left the tent. "So, you were just collecting data for passive-aggressive terror attacks?" McCary asked.

"Never mind our brilliant strategies! The old man acts weird every year at this time; always going off to the caves, alone, hypothesizing our rippled forehead physiology allows us to commune with spirits or something," Celecc explained, trying to cover her forehead.

The kid spoke up. "Papa made it work. Papa is the Sage."

"Whoa, an arbitrary statement with no context," McCary realized. "That's precisely the motivation we need to 'explore' more into this, if you catch my word usage."

Deborah nodded, confirming that she did.

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"Do you think that kid's one-off claims about his old man are true?" Deborah asked as she and McCary stepped into the dark caves, beaming flashlights all around.

McCary shrugged. "They're a people who exist so another species can be thankful, therefore a higher power may not be so out-of-the-question, necessity-wise."

"--INTERRUPTION BY LOUD SHOUTING!?" shouted Sigon as both McCary and Deborah became surrounded by his Klingon crew.

"You've allied with the enemy in an instinctive repulsion against Klingon kind!"

McCary replied, "More to the point that I realized what I was thankful for thanks to you-- which, in itself is a separate thanking, thank you very much."

"Don't thank me: Thank your pitiful appreciation for Federation values, which you clearly desire to express through action, like some kind of action-value paradox," Sigon cursed just before spitting in disgust. "What you fail to realize is that every year we must fight the Sage which spawns in this cave, and threatens to destroy this planet and its people."

They both turned as a hovering, glowing version of Hemly floated over and opened non-corporeal eyes at them. *"This land has been disturbed by intruders. The Takarian people bare no witness!"*

"Wait, those are the people DiaMon Cide enslaved that one time? Their Sages went missing from the Delta Quadrant eons ago?" McCary hesitated before turning to Sigon. "Captain, this creature is antagonized by historical misconception!"

Sigon replied, "Well, duh'gh! That's our version of 'duh' by the way."

*"Cleansing by means of extermination!"* the modified voice of Hemly declared abstractly as he began flowing bands of matter destructive energy.

McCary stole a bat'leth off a distracted Klingon and began hacking into the fused, part-corporeal entity. "Hey, my mother gave me that!" Klingon Engineer Poroka complained.

The other Klingons joined in and, minutes later, the Sage left Hemly's body. Hemly fell to the ground, bleeding and in pain. "Well, it's about time," McCary said to the Klingon Captain, by way of some sort of resolution. "I was wondering when we'd discover a real reason behind all this. It's not justified, but at least there's some level of honor in all these horrors of late."

"The what in the what-now?" Sigon replied, having been busy biting the head off an Arin'Sen sewer rat.

Then, Hemly groaned as Poroka helped him to his feet. "Uggh. Same time next year?" Hemly managed to croak.

"We wouldn't have it any other way. Qa'pla!" Sigon saluted.

At those comments, McCary's jaw dropped. It was apparent the warrior class was working with the Arin'Sen to use the Sage for their own devices. McCary interrupted as Hemly began limping his way out of the cave. "Uh, what? Are you saying this whole yearly invasion thing is just some kind of interdependent role play??"

Sigon hooked his bat'leth to his back somehow. "This is more than your simplification hullabaloo. We Klingons covet our reminiscings of real battles, and the Takarian Sage maintains that through authenticity. Like the Sage himself, memory is what motivates us."

"Except in completely different ways! The only justifiable resemblance here is theme?"

The warrior grasped McCary's shoulder in camaraderie. "And that has always been good enough for a Klingon. Come! We will feast on blood bread sticks!"

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Later, McCary, Deborah and Morris sat at a table in the town square with the Klingons, as large volumes of blood-based food were placed down right in front of them by lower-class Arin'Sen servers.

"This feels wrong?" McCary hesitated in cognitive dissonance, seconds before taking a bite out of his Klingon bread stick. "Pass the blood butter?"

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